

Introduction

The IRIS manual can be downloaded from the IDOT web site www.dot.state.il.us under the “Doing Business” selection. The manual is also available as an IDOT electronic pdf document found within the Inside IDOT Intranet.

The purpose of this manual is two-fold. The first is to define what, why and how roadway information is collected. Then, once information is collected, to explain when and how it is entered into the Illinois Roadway Information System (IRIS).

The following overview explains the scope of IRIS activities and defines some general guidelines. A detailed explanation of each data element is provided later.

What is Collected

Roadway information is collected for all public highways as defined in Illinois Compiled Statutes (605 ILCS 5/2-202). A 'public highway' is defined as the entire width, between right-of-way lines, of a highway that is open for public travel. This includes existing and proposed roads as well as dedicated right-of-way. However, this does not include roadways or driveways provided by a business or landowner for access to their property.

Previously unreported public highways must be 0.04 mile or longer to be added to IRIS. Existing IRIS alignments are revised for changes affecting 0.01 mile or more.

Why is Roadway Information Collected

IRIS roadway information is collected for two primary reasons - to qualify for funding and to prioritize highway rehabilitation needs. Funding qualification is used to maximize the amount of money available to highway agencies. This is accomplished through several processes, most visible of which are the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) and Motor Fuel Tax (MFT). However, other lower profile specialized funding processes, such as Highway Safety Projects, also rely on IRIS.

To develop the most effective highway maintenance program possible, IDOT anticipates and prioritizes rehabilitation needs. Needed improvements are projected using information from IRIS, for example Surface Type, AADT and CRS Rating, in combination with other information. These projections are prioritized and included with funding and manpower restrictions to determine which roadway rehabilitation projects will be undertaken.

Open and Passable

A road must be both “ open” and “ passable” to qualify for funding.

To be considered “ open” for public travel, the road should be free of obstructions (gates, chains, fences, fallen trees, etc.) that would prevent a motorist from driving the full length of the road. The road must be free of signs indicating no trespassing, road closed, or other markers, which indicate public travel is prohibited. Roadway information should be collected for roads leading up to a closed bridge or culvert until the approaches are no longer open or passable. The public vehicular use of the highway must not be prohibited, for reasons other than construction, for more than 90 days in a calendar year to be considered open.

Generally, the test for “ passable” is whether the road can be safely traversed in a four-wheel drive vehicle in dry conditions without leaving the roadway.

In addition, the following criteria must be met to be considered “ passable” :

- The roadway shall be free of excessive ruts or potholes. Rutting in excess of 9 inches in depth should not exist on the majority of the roadway, unless a vehicle can straddle the ruts and traverse the road with relative ease at a low rate of speed.
- For dirt roads, delineation of the roadway must be readily identifiable, either by wheel paths or cross section recognition.
- Vegetation and other obstructions lateral to the roadway should be adequately cleared to allow a standard size four-wheel drive to pass without rubbing or scratching the vehicle.
- Adequate drainage must be available to prevent ponding on the roadway, or erosion of the roadway, except in instances of seasonal or prolonged flooding.

How is Roadway Information Collected

The roadway information collection activity varies depending on the highway being inventoried. Information for an interstate highway is provided entirely by IDOT agencies. However, information for a local road can come from one or more non-IDOT agencies as well as IDOT, for example county, township or municipal.

The district Bureau of Program Development is responsible for coordinating collection activities with agencies in their district. This involves maintaining continual contact with IDOT and non-IDOT agencies to insure that IRIS information is complete, accurate and up-to-date. The following procedures are provided as guidelines in coordinating these activities. These procedures are suggestions that can be altered to meet the needs of each district.

For highways outside of local agency responsibility, contact with other agencies and IDOT bureaus, both district and central, can identify areas of change. Because of the volume of information needed and the miles involved, field review must be kept to a minimum. This can be accomplished through several methods. First, when construction plans are available, most information can be extracted from them. After reviewing the plans, a quick drive over the road can verify that there is no significant deviation from the plan information. In-field measurements are not necessary unless a problem is suspected.

Second, where plans are not available, once an initial inventory is completed, drive-through reviews can verify the accuracy of the information. Again, additional in-field measurements are not required unless a problem is suspected.

For highways that are the responsibility of local agencies, coordination with the county engineer and township or road district commissioner is sufficient to identify most county and township highway changes. Copies of township or road district maintenance plats, signed by both the county engineer and township or road district commissioner for that township or road district, should be retained in the district office.

When a township or road district road is annexed into a municipality, that section of road must be changed to a municipal street. A set of maps, plats, and the legal description of the annexation must be sent to the Bureau of Urban Program Planning.

In addition, the existence, length and other readily apparent characteristics of local roads "open to public travel" should be verified periodically. A five-year cycle for complete reinventory of roads within a county is desirable. This period can vary depending on area growth. However, each county needs to be checked at least once every ten years.

Reinventory of municipal street systems is not necessary. Annual contact with municipal officials can identify those areas that need to be reviewed because of incorporation or construction. This contact should include obtaining copies of corporate limit maps and ordinances of incorporation or disconnection.

iWhen are IHIS Backup Files Created

Annual copies of all IHIS files are provided for historic reference. These files are prepared at the beginning of each calendar year and retained indefinitely.

Additionally, all IHIS information is copied to system backup tapes on a regular basis. These tapes are used to reload IHIS if a massive computer system failure occurs. Because information is stored on system backup tapes in computer program language, it is not readable by IHIS user programs.